



Washington State
Board of Education



Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically

March 26-27, 2008 Meeting Highlights

On March 26-27, the State Board of Education met at the Puget Sound Educational Service District to discuss several initiatives: giving guidance to staff on a draft accountability index that will be proposed to the legislature on how to identify schools into tiers for awards and assistance; next steps for completing the new K-12 math standards; the draft rule for the third credit of math for high school graduation; and proposals for reviewing new credit frameworks for high school graduation requirements. The Board listened to presentations from David Heil and Associates, on their review of the current OSPI science standards, as well as the Black Education Strategy Roundtable Panel.

Board Actions

New Executive Committee Elected

Mary Jean Ryan was reelected Chair and Warren Smith was reelected Vice Chair for the next two years. Steve Floyd was elected as the one-year Board Liaison member. Jeff Vincent was elected as the two-year Board Liaison member.

Direction for the Accountability Index

Staff will continue to work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and stakeholders on a proposed draft accountability index to identify schools for awards and assistance. Components of that index include a school's status on: student achievement, student improvement status, and adequate yearly progress with No Child Left Behind. Board members are particularly interested in exploring ways to recognize schools that have improved. This index will continue to be refined over the summer and fall.

Direction for Third Math Credit

Staff will work with stakeholders to explore different language on the election process for the third math credit that will be used at a meeting with the parent and/or guardian, as well as the school counselor or advisor, to ensure feasibility of the requirement.

Direction for High School Credit Frameworks

The Board directed staff to work with the 24 credit requirements frameworks proposed on Thursday morning for stakeholder feedback.

Approval Items

- Contract for Policy Barriers Study by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
- Contract for State/Local Partnership Blueprint by Mass Insight Education and Research Institute
- 180 day waiver requests for 26 school districts.

Accountability Update

The legislature has asked the Board to adopt criteria to identify schools and districts, which are successful, in need of assistance, and those where students persistently fail. Staff presented its initial work on a proposed accountability index as well as the findings of its technical experts. The purpose of this index is to identify schools for recognition of outstanding achievement or improvement and is a way to classify schools into different tiers for assistance. The proposed index encompasses: student achievement, improvement over time, and the status of a school's adequate yearly progress.

The Board advertised nationally for two contracts: one to do a policy barriers study and another to create a blueprint for state/local partnerships for low performing schools. This work will provide the Board with options for how to move forward with its accountability proposals this summer and fall. It is expected that the contractors from both studies will be engaged in talking with key education stakeholders, as well as local district administrators and teachers.

The Board will hold a work session on June 19th to examine the work of its consultants on the policy barriers study and state/local partnership blueprint.

Math Standards Update

The Board is working with Strategic Teaching to continue its review of the new OSPI math standards. More in depth work will include a shortened exemplar review of the February standards with other states, national, and international frameworks, as well as specific language and content changes recommended to the new OSPI math standards. A special meeting will be held on April 18th for the Board to consider the consultant's recommendations for K-8 standards, followed by a review of the Algebra I and Geometry standards at the May 14-15 Board meeting and Algebra II at the July 23-24 Board meeting.

Third Credit of Math

Staff has drafted language and worked with stakeholders on a new rule for three credits of high school math beginning with the Class of 2013. This rule aligns with the Board's specified purpose of the high school diploma—to prepare all students for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship.

A third math credit will be required for all students. They must complete this third credit of math in an Algebra II course that aligns with the new math standards. This course requirement can be completed through an approved career and technical education course of study that is comparable in course content but allows the student to earn more than one credit to complete.

A student may, upon completion of Algebra I and Geometry, elect a different third math credit. This election shall allow the student to replace the Algebra II requirement with a third math credit that furthers their career path defined in their high school and beyond plan. A defined process for this election is currently under review, but will include the student, his/her family, if possible, as well as staff from the high school.

Staff is working with the Washington State School Directors Association, and others, on a survey to examine implementation costs for this third math credit, as well as other possible changes to the high school credits such as science. The Board plans to advocate for the additional costs that would be incurred to implement this and other graduation requirements.

The Board will have an additional public comment at its May Board meeting. At the July Board meeting, there will be an official public hearing on the proposed rule for the third math credit and the Board will address implementation issues for the third credit. It is anticipated that adoption of the rule for the third math credit will occur at the July meeting when the Algebra II math standards are completed.

Meaningful High School Diploma Update

The Board approved a draft graduation requirements credit frameworks that underscored themes emerging from the fall public outreach sessions: one diploma for all with multiple pathways. The Board also reiterated that the message—no unfunded mandates—had been heard clearly. The Board will provide information to the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force and put together a budget request for the 2009 legislative session that will reflect its policy priorities.

The draft graduation requirements credit framework offers multiple pathways and strategies for students to earn 24 credits. Feedback on the draft framework, which took elements from each of the draft frameworks presented and reconfigured them, will be collected this spring through surveys and focus meetings with stakeholders.

The Board agreed to convene a work session on April 22nd to discuss the culminating project, high school and beyond plan, and Memorandum of Agreement.

Science

The Board reviewed the preliminary recommendations of the consultants conducting the science standards review. The team from David Heil and Associates, Inc. explained the expert review process that compared Washington's science standards to exemplar standards in other states (California, Colorado, and Massachusetts), countries (Singapore and Finland), and national standards (National Science Education Standards). The team also acknowledged the input they received on an earlier version of the draft recommendations from the Science Standards Advisory Panel.

The team found that, “While the current science standards for the state of Washington rated relatively well when compared to the benchmark states and nations in this review, the state of Washington faces the critical challenge of moving from a ‘good’ set of science standards to an ‘excellent’ set of science standards for the future.” The consulting team will conduct focus groups and meet with the Advisory Panel, in April, before presenting final recommendations to the Board in May.

The Black Education Strategy Roundtable

Dr. Thelma Jackson, President, Washington Alliance of Black School Educators, described the origin of the Roundtable and their purpose to bring focus on the achievement gap that exists for African-American students. Dr. Mona H. Bailey, Senior Associate, Institute for Educational Inquiry, provided information about the goals and work of the Roundtable to bring together educators, business men and women, parents, and community members. Dr. James B. Smith, Adjunct Professor, City University, shared information about the Roundtable’s work and advocacy for House Bill 2722. The Bill provides funding for Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, for creation of an advisory committee to craft a strategic plan, addressing the achievement gap for African-American students. An initial report is due to the Board and others by December 2008.

For additional information and Board meeting materials go to: www.sbe.wa.gov or call the Board office at: 360-725-6025.